

**SUMMARY OF THE
MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 24, 2001**

The Membership and Outreach Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Thursday, May 24, 2001, at 8:00 a.m. Mountain Daylight Time (MDT) as part of the Seventh NELAC Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT. The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Margaret Prevost of the New York State Department of Health. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss listed agendas items.*

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Prevost introduced herself and asked that each committee member introduce themselves and state their affiliation.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

Ms. Prevost began with a discussion of the need for a brochure or a newsletter which would advertise the benefits of participation in NELAC. The idea of the brochures & newsletter would be a low key approach of showing the benefits of participation in NELAC. Target audiences mentioned were local associations of various disciplines involved with the generation and use of environmental data, as well as non-NELAC states which have chosen a wait-and-see attitude.

In addition to the identification of target audiences, Ms. Prevost indicated that prioritization of efforts by the committee should be foremost in the development of outreach materials. To utilize the limited resources available to NELAC, making decisions about what efforts should be made first and fitting those first efforts to a large number of potential NELAC participants would be crucial to the success of the outreach.

Ms. Prevost introduced Dr. Steve Billets, the Acting Executive Secretary of NELAC, and asked him to speak on the efforts his group would offer to the outreach efforts previously mentioned. Dr. Billets noted the direction that NELAC was taking in the development of a non-profit organization which could support these outreach efforts. He also stated that he anticipated that the non-profit organization could support brochures and/or newsletters and would be able to speed up the time frame in which these efforts could be made and that he would ask his graphics group in Las Vegas to provide a template for these newsletters and/or brochures in the near future. At that point the committee could then provide the content for these outreach efforts.

There was a great deal of comment and input from the attendees at this committee meeting towards the creation of brochures and newsletters and the identification of target audiences. Also there were numerous suggestions on the attitude of the outreach efforts. Several audience members stated that they thought the best way to approach the potential market was to be forthright about the benefits of participating in NELAC, but not boastful. The benefits of participation would sell themselves, however

a low key delivery would be best, allowing the targeted audience to perceive NELAC on its merits rather than based on marketing finesse.

There were also several suggestions as to how to inform a more targeted audience about NELAC through co-sponsoring events such as trade shows and regional environmental conferences. This would take the message to the audience more directly and seems possible in light of the non-profit organization formation whereas NELAC was more limited in the resources available through previous federal funding. Ms. Prevost indicated that this first effort would be developed and sent to the targeted audience very soon.

There was also a suggestion to simplify and/or reorganize the Quality Systems Chapter to make it less intimidating to those not familiar to the NELAC process. It was stated by an attendee that the format of Chapter 5 was not user friendly and that alone could discourage potential participants from seeking NELAC accreditation.

DEVELOPMENT OF A SECOND NELAC WEBSITE

Dr. Billets mentioned that the NELAC non-profit organization would also develop a second website dedicated to NELAC information which could include access to the NELAC national database, as well as offer user friendly access to such outreach functions as committee membership information forms, feedback opportunities, and frequently asked questions (FAQ) pages.

There was also discussion of the current NELAC Website and the complexity of that site. Suggestions from those in attendance focused on certain areas where the NELAC Website is almost impassable by those without Internet savvy. The intent of the second website will be to have very obvious buttons and links to provide the most basic information on NELAC participation. Ms. Prevost also discussed the revision of the “NELAC Needs You” form, which was distributed in the conference packets. There was a suggestion from the floor that the form also indicate the length of obligation in joining a NELAC Committee. This suggestion was well received by the committee.

The “NELAC Needs You” form has contact information for Ms. Prevost and is intended to be sent to her upon completion by those who wish to join a NELAC Committee. Ms. Prevost stated that the Membership and Outreach Committee would be the repository for those forms and that each volunteer would be considered.

In response to a comment from the audience, Ms. Prevost assured participants that membership diversity is sought by NELAC Committees.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Prevost thanked those in attendance for their input into the brainstorming effort during this meeting and there being no further comments from the audience, she adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

**ACTION ITEMS
MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING
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Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Committee will work towards a more friendly NELAC website	Ongoing
2.	The Committee will design printed material for outreach purposes to increase membership and participation in NELAC	Ongoing

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MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING
MAY 24, 2001**

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